

# SC

# SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



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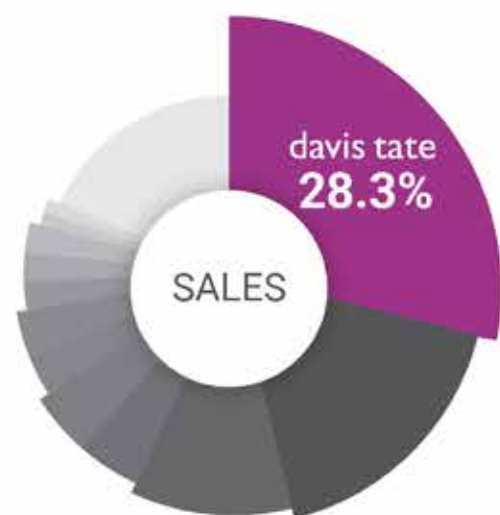
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## OUR VILLAGE. OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.

**VOTE IN THE  
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23.2.23  
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**FEB/MAR 2023**

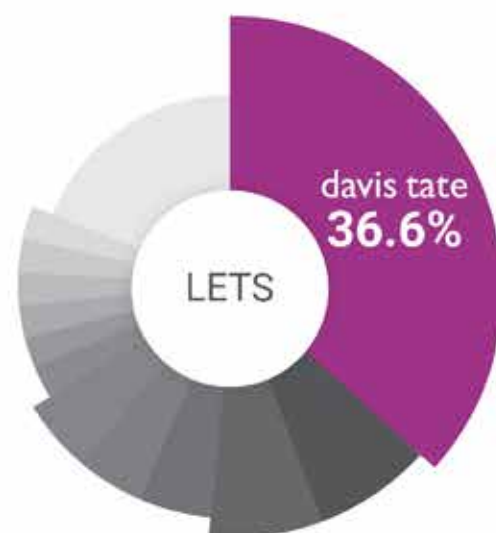
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# FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Wishing you all a healthy new year and a less difficult 2023 than is predicted.

Forgive me for the repetition but there is little that we can do concerning national and international events, sadly. BUT we can make a difference within the village, looking out for elderly neighbours, families with small children and little or no heat in their homes and encourage a walk to the Library, which has been designated as our warm space for all villagers.

From the front page it is a clear message that if we wish to remain a VILLAGE then a vote YES for the revised Neighbourhood Plan on 23 February will give us some protection. Pages 17 to 19 give some detail which I encourage you to read, and more detail can be found on the website [www.scpcc-ndp.co.uk](http://www.scpcc-ndp.co.uk)

I find it fascinating that without me influencing the subject theme, one always seems to appear in every magazine. In this one it is about special people in the community both now and in the past.

In this edition it is Fred, Sue and Brenda and so many others I have yet to hear about. If you know of someone, please let me know, deadline dates for copy are 1 March, 1 May, 1 July, 1 September and 1 November.

I look forward to hearing from you. ●

*Diana*

Diana Pearman Editor

## MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



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**SC SONNING COMMON  
MAGAZINE**



# MECE NEWS



The final week of the Christmas term has been one of my highpoints as the Headteacher of Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge so far. It was a week when our values of academic excellence, striving hard at all times, valuing the power of community and developing character were evident in abundance.

Our school production of Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol', was a brilliant example of just how talented and committed our students are. As ever, the event had drama offstage as well as on, but despite sickness bugs and last-minute understudies the show definitely went on! The final week also saw most of our students partake in Christmas lunch

served by my leadership and admin teams. Two sittings, Christmas music and a fun atmosphere made for a fantastic occasion. Most importantly, we have endeavoured to keep the learning up until the last moment and this was exemplified by tutor time on the penultimate day when I covered a Year 11 group. The first bell rang and before I had said a word each student got their revision booklets out and by the time the second bell rang, they were all silent and engaged in maths revision tasks. My cover of tutor time allowed Ms Hussein to go and observe all of Year 8 who were engaged in our tutor reading initiative. This push to ensure we use every minute is important so no student is able to say that we are a school that just play games in the last week!

Our term ended with two fantastic assemblies led by Mr Hunter and Miss Cheeseman with students' efforts being acknowledged and rewarded. It was great to see the students applaud each other's efforts and acknowledge the determination and application of their peers. In addition, it was lovely to witness the excitement that the current state of



play in the House competition generated. The assembly finished with a rousing rendition of the 12 days of Christmas which left many of the staff choked up. It was in so many ways a metaphor for how far the school has come in the last three years.

Community is always one of the key



values we try to promote, and I think at Christmas this is even more important. Therefore, our recent push for foodbank donations and the generous way in which the students and families have given was very pleasing. Similarly, we will be launching our House Charity work in January with a big push on supporting these local good causes and I am looking forward to hearing about the different ways the students will support this project. One of our biggest internal improvements has been the number of leadership and mentorship opportunities available to our students this year. Led by Miss Cheeseman and supported by Ms Hussein we have seen students among other things delivering tours, supporting younger readers, mentoring through the house system, and raising money for their school Prom through Christmas card deliveries. All these opportunities teach social skills, resilience and patience and it has been a pleasure to witness these ideas bear fruit. Lastly, and as mentioned before our school production is a wonderful community event and so many of the students are involved or come and watch - it makes you realise what a special school MECE is.

I am also very grateful for the way the parents and members of the MECE community have supported CESA (our PTA) this term. The quiz night and the raffle and other bits and pieces have seen CESA raise well in excess of £3000 which is heart-warming and all the money raised will be used for good causes for the students.

Lastly, I'd like to wish all a belated Happy New Year and I hope 2023 can be a fantastic year for everyone in the Sonning Common community. ●

ANDY HARTLEY  
Headteacher

# SCPS NEWS AUTUMN INTO WINTER 2022



Winter certainly seemed to come early with very low temperatures before Christmas – and New Year has brought back the mild weather!

But the children learnt about the weather first hand as they still went out to Forest Camp sessions learning the three states of water – ice had formed in a bucket overnight, water was poured on the fire to put it out, and that turned into steam. They made some fantastic natural art by seeing how leaves froze in the water bucket overnight. The children were lent hats and gloves, had a hot chocolate and snack around the fire, sang Christmas songs and then they were back indoors before they got too cold. Fabulous!



The Christmas Fair was its usual mix of chaos and fun, and was very successful. A carol concert was held on a bitterly cold Thursday evening in the playground, which many brave parents attended to hear their children's lovely voices singing.



Christmas lunch of turkey and all the trimmings (and yes brussel sprouts!), followed by chocolate snowmen and trees, was enjoyed by the whole school with crackers, jokes and lots of Christmas songs sung....



Christmas probably seems a long time ago now, and the school are looking forward to enjoying more outside time and getting on with learning new things, one of which is learning new songs in assembly! Wednesday assemblies for the four older year groups this year have twin themes.

Theme One is getting the massed audience to learn and sing along to 'classic' or topical tunes. To mark the change of monarch, the children learned 'Sing' – the Commonwealth song by Gary Barlow and Andrew Lloyd Webber, and to mark Black History Month they learned the words and music to the spiritual 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot'.



Theme Two is about inspiring children by introducing them to people and discussing activities they may not have yet experienced.

Mr Hirst told us ..... "we have been lucky enough to have three exceptional visitors



to give the children a feel for what it takes to achieve in specific sports. We have plans to invite musicians and artists in future weeks, but so far we have covered three sports – rowing, basketball and football – in the company of experts – former pupil and GB rower Phoebe Snowden, Reading Rockets' Jordan Jackson and Steph Johnson, and today FC Porto's Danny Loader.

The speakers were asked to deliver a simple message to the children which would be memorable. Phoebe urged them to 'try everything' – highlighting that as the way she ended up rowing. Steph's message was about the accessibility of all sports to all people (including disabled sportspeople), and Danny spoke about the need to enjoy the whole process – not just the matches, but also the training, the travelling, the nutrition, and all the ups and downs that accompany high-level sport.

We are very grateful to the speakers for their time and to the children for remaining attentive and interested throughout.

Thanks also to Miss Snowden, Miss Green and Dr Loader for organising the visits." ●





# ANOTHER AMAZING AND UPLIFTING NIGHT!



**Santa on a Tractor and his team enjoyed touring the village on 11 December 2022 and was well received by the children, parents, grandparents and everyone who came out to see him on the sleigh pulled by Sam Metcalf on his tractor. It was a very cold night, and so Sam opted for a warmer tractor with a heated cabin – a sensible move, meanwhile Santa's specs steamed up and the two elves took to wearing several layers of thermals in an**

**attempt to not turn blue, but the cold did enhance their red cheeks!**

This year Santa was joined by Chief Elf, Ruby Coyne, and her helper Jake Coyne riding up-front with the reindeer.

The fabulous Matt Hopson and Matt White ensured that the collectors knew what they were doing and organised the route.

There were so many helpers that stepped up last minute and I don't want to miss anyone, so thank you to all.

It was great to have some of the teenagers of the village stepping in with their parents to help and grandparents too making it a real inter-generational event.

Santa and his team raised a whopping £799.61 which was distributed to Sonning Common Youth Centre and The First Responders Sonning Common shortly after the event. The Youth Centre work hard to entertain the older children in the

village, and many of the villagers have been touched by the work of the First Responders, so both are very deserving causes. If you missed us and would like to donate please contact me and I can arrange to add to the totals and distribute accordingly, or feel free to donate directly to the charities.

Seeing all the happy faces on the children and the adults alike is truly heart warming and uplifting. There was dancing in the streets and children following the sleigh which was lovely to see, some walked pretty much the entire route.

Santa thoroughly enjoyed seeing everyone and hopes that some of the newer helpers will be back next year.

We always welcome new helpers. There is so much work that happens behind the scenes on the lead up, so if you'd like to help next year please let us know. ●

HELEN COYNE

## SONNING COMMON WI CHEQUE PRESENTATION

**Wyfold Riding for the Disabled has recently had to spend over £800 on replacing some of its out of date or damaged riding hats which are worn by its disabled riders and drivers.**

Two local organisations and a generous grandad have come to the rescue and between them have helped to fund the new hats.

Sonning Common WI have been raising money for local charities with their coffee mornings organised by Marion Bayliss and her friend Barbara Saddler. They chose Wyfold RDA as one of their charities and have donated £300 to the hat fund. Marion and Barbara came up to the stables recently on a chilly but sunny morning to present their cheque to Jill Goodall, the Tuesday Team Coach, and the volunteers and riders. It was happy smiles all round.

One of our loyal and regular supporters, Henley



Rotary Club, has also very kindly donated £250 to the Hat Fund.

One of our very young riders Lottie Walker who comes on a Wednesday is often accompanied by her grandfather Ray Still. Ray was so impressed by what he saw that he has donated £400 to our Hat Fund.

'We would like to say a very big thank you to all these wonderful people without whom Wyfold RDA would not be the thriving and successful charity that it is.' ●

GILLIAN RUSHWORTH  
Fundraising Coordinator  
Wyfold RDA

## KNITTED SANTAS

More examples of the good work done by the village Women's Institute. Many of their activities include raising money for local small charities. One example being Wyfold and there are many others throughout the year. ●

# ROTHERFIELD UNITED FC December Festive Fundraisers:

## CHRISTMAS QUIZ

A very successful Christmas Quiz was hosted by Santa himself, ably aided by his Elf!

Seventeen tables of parents and friends enjoyed an evening of festive fun and laughter held at Sonning Common Primary School. The Santa Loo roll challenge was particularly fun for all teams and the quiz master Jamie Cox revelled in the job.

The club would especially like to thank the generous donors of the raffle prizes... who helped to raise a total of over £1,500 for the club.

## SANTA DASH

A brilliant turn out on a December Sunday morning, in icy cold temperatures, raised over £500 for the club in the 2022 Rotherfield Santa Dash.

Around 80 Santas took part at the Bishopswood Sports Ground, the youngest being only 3! All ran, walked, or jogged the course and had a great time even in the deep frost there was that day. After the dash there was a 'beat the Santa in Goal' game, and a few hot chocolates!

Thank you to everyone that took part and to Alan Noble for organising both events.



## NEW CRAFT CENTRE

**Sharona, at Heath and Watkins has recognised that many of the residents have really missed the Occasions shop which had existed for many years in our village centre. To have to drive or bus into Reading for a spool of thread seemed an unnecessary consumption of time. As an occasional needlewoman it was very useful to me.**

Shro has redesigned the study that was part of the house, achieving this conversion herself, into an impressive haberdashery centre. The attached photos show what she has achieved so far. A special thanks from me and hopefully lots of other residents.

DIANA PEARMAN



## GIFT BAGS

Christmas treats bags were delivered to families who are supported by the Food Bank – hope they were enjoyed? Members of the magazine editorial team, shopped and packed the bags.





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**Phil Sweetman**



# FISH VOLUNTEER CENTRE



With troubled waters behind us and (relatively) smooth waters ahead we at FISH Volunteer Centre are keen to get on and continue serving this fabulous village.

Our car journeys to hospitals, clinics, memory clubs, hairdressers and the Health Centre, as well as other medically related destinations are going on apace. Prescriptions deliveries are also included.

Bus trips are popular again especially the shopping trips to Henley and Reading, some leisure trips have yet to reach capacity though.

Our Home Visiting Service volunteers are constantly working to balance the needs of our lonely or vulnerable with visitors to call and visit them. Somehow they manage to balance the system and look after all those in need.

The monthly tea parties had to move out of the village hall due to building work following water leaks. The wonderful tea ladies transferred the party, teacups, cakes and all, to Christ the King Hall in Sedgwell Road and managed to let everyone know of the change, those they missed being

redirected on the day by a stalwart volunteer stationed at the village hall. Happily, we are back in the village hall every second Monday in the month.

Our community room is used by local charities for their meetings as well as a knit and natter group and the foot care sessions.

Anyone requiring any of our services please ring **0118 972 3986**, (open 9.30-12.00 Monday to Friday)

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or message us via our web site  
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Please read below our volunteering opportunities because FISH can always use more volunteers.

I would like to take this opportunity to give a huge thank you to all currently working for the charity.

This includes the wonderful office staff who keep the whole system running beautifully, and our hard-working drivers making sure all requests are fulfilled. Big thanks also to our ever-reliable bus drivers and to all our compassionate befrienders.

Cheers also especially to our trustees (welcome newcomer David Weeks) and to our managers with their hands on the tillers of the office, the bus, and the befriending group.

A big thank you to one and all ●

**RICHARD MCQUILLAN**  
(Chair FISH)

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Saturday 1 April at 7.30pm.

More details regarding the concert and how to obtain tickets will be on our website: [www.southchilternchoralsociety.co.uk](http://www.southchilternchoralsociety.co.uk)

## SHEDQUARTERS MOVING UPWARDS AND ONWARDS!

What a wonderful month December 22 turned out to be for Shedquarters as we were granted planning permission for our shed project at our site at Peppard War Memorial Hall.

We can now set about fund raising in earnest. We have been already pledged sums of £10,000 and £5000. Plus the Harmony choir who meet at the Hall gave us £2800 the proceeds of their Christmas concert which was a fun afternoon so a big thank you to Barry & Jenny Wood and the choir.

Our next big task is to draw up a lease, prepare the site for two joined portacabins and lay on water and electricity. However we still are in need of funds as our target is approx. £45,000.

REMEMBER THIS PROJECT IS FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE COMMUNITY

Any enquiries about joining or donating to Shedquarters please contact Sheila Maughan by email at "[sheila@arnwood.org](mailto:sheila@arnwood.org)"



[www.shedquarters.org.uk](http://www.shedquarters.org.uk)

## SoCo Spring-clean

Sunday 5 March

10.00 meet at Village Hall Wood lane  
love to hear from people who'd like to get involved,  
any suggestions for areas that need picking  
contact us

[soco.springclean@gmail.com](mailto:soco.springclean@gmail.com)

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- Featuring original artwork produced during, and depicting, the Second World War
- A diverse range of styles and subjects, from well-known and lesser-known artists
- Exhibition to tour following first show at SOFO Museum

The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum is open from Tuesday-Saturday 11am-5pm and Sunday 2pm-5pm. The county's own military history museum is located in the gardens of the Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock, on the doorstep of Blenheim palace.

Museum Director, Ursula Corcoran Contact for Further details and hiring the Art of WW2 collection: [museumdirector@sofo.org.uk](mailto:museumdirector@sofo.org.uk)

Marketing Supervisor, Duncan Parsons Contact for general information and promotional material: [duncan.parsons@sofo.org.uk](mailto:duncan.parsons@sofo.org.uk)

## CHILTERN EDGE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY YOUR LOCAL GARDENING CLUB WINTER / SPRING 2023

TUESDAY 14th February AFTERNOON TALK 2:30 - 4:30PM  
Gertrude Jekyll  
A Talk by Richard Biscrope  
Peppard War Memorial Hall Gallowstree Road RG9 5JA

TUESDAY 14TH March EVENING TALK 7:30 - 9:00PM  
For the love of Roses  
A Talk by Gillian Taylor  
Peppard War Memorial Hall Gallowstree Road RG9 5JA

All Welcome  
Membership £8 p.a. - New members welcome  
All talks free to Members / Talks cost £2.00 for Non Members  
All Talks subject to change please check on web site  
\*Please contact a member for information for the Zoom talk  
[www.cehs.co.uk](http://www.cehs.co.uk)

SONNING COMMON the WI  
Invite you to  
**COFFEE MORNINGS**  
Sonning Common Village Hall  
**WEDNESDAYS 1<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY**  
**and 1<sup>st</sup> MARCH**  
10.30 a.m. - 12 Noon

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## Health Walks

Do you feel the need to get fit and take more exercise this year? I know I do! We live in a beautiful part of the country - so get out and enjoy it!

The Health Walks continue on a regular basis, but there are no walk timetables in paper form at the moment, so you will have to check the website for days/starting places/distances: [www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable](http://www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable).

If you want to speak to someone about any aspect of the Health Walks, phone Chris Brook on 0118 972 2609



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good stuff.



# Parish news

The content of this page is the sole responsibility of, and is paid for by, Sonning Common Parish Council

## MUGA

### Hire the new floodlit MUGA at Memorial Park

Floodlights are now operational at Memorial Park's MUGA, making its use possible throughout evenings, up to 9.30pm.

The Polymeric area of the MUGA (40m x 20m with markings for football, basketball, netball and tennis) can be hired for the following costs:

Daytime until 5pm @ £20 per hour (incl of VAT)

Floodlit and evenings after 5pm @ £45 per hour (incl of VAT)

Bookings can be made via the Sonning Common Village Hall website (<https://www.sonningcommonvillagehalls.co.uk/bookings-and-calendar/>).

### Environmental sustainability

A swale is located in the southeast corner of Memorial Park. This is a type of sustainable drainage - a shallow, broad channel designed to store water and allow water to drain away into the soil naturally and infiltrate. On some occasions the rain will fall faster than it will drain away and water may pond temporarily. The swale means that the Parish Council could create this efficient drainage system more cost effectively than installing a large underground tank. Our illustrator Rory McNeill has drawn this cartoon to show how the swale works.

### Landscaping

You may have noticed the planting of trees on various parts of Memorial Park, over

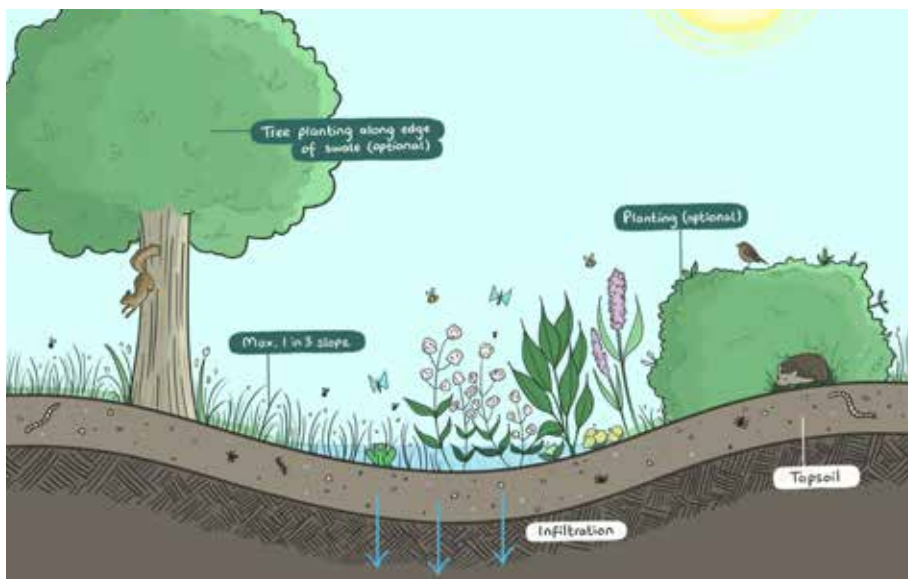
recent weeks. The wildflower areas have been strimmed, ready for new growth in the spring. Further planting of whips to create hedging will also occur in the coming months. If you are interested in being involved, or in donating a tree (for example in memory of a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion, or simply to contribute to the site) please contact Diana Pearman.

### Praise for the site design

Recently the Parish Council asked for an independent report on the sports plateau, from a leading sports surface expert. This is so that we ensure all appropriate maintenance is undertaken on an on-going basis. Dr Tim Lodge of Agrostis Sports Surface Consulting said: "I would like to state what a splendid design has been achieved for the site as a whole. The integration of natural and artificial sports surfaces, including the perimeter track with distance markers, is impressive. The potential biodiversity enhancement that may be achieved with the swale, an integral feature of the MUGA drainage system, is also excellent."

### Your Park

Memorial Park is your park. Please help us by putting rubbish in the bins round the site, especially those people who use the MUGA and playground. Please use the trackway rather than cutting across the grass when it is wet, to avoid creating a muddy path. Please also report any anti-social behaviour so we can maintain a safe, welcoming environment for everyone to enjoy. ●



## NEW PARISH COUNCILLORS



The parish office is very keen to recruit new councillors and applications from residents of Paddock Close or Lea Meadow would be particularly welcome. As new residents to the village your perspective would give an additional community view.

Please contact the Clerk Philip Collings 972 3616

## WARM SPACE

The Parish Council has designated the Library on Grove Road as the WARM SPACE.

See page 33 for opening times.



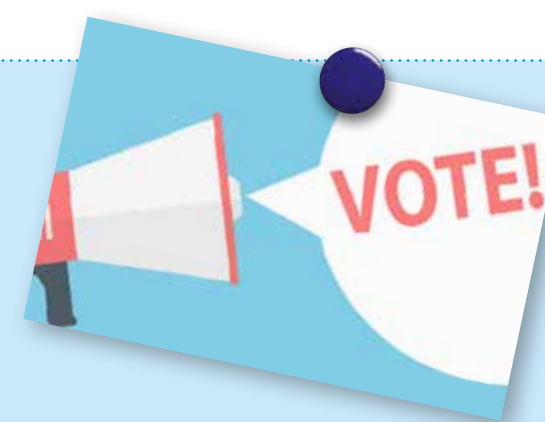
## VILLAGE DAY

SATURDAY 10 JUNE 2023

A village Day is booked in Memorial Park Bring a picnic/food stalls/dog show/craft stalls/activities and fun for all ages

If you have any ideas/would like to organise/ would like to run an activity THEN PLEASE CONTACT THE PARISH OFFICE SARA 972 3616

# VOTE FOR THE REVISED NDP



*We all like to think of our village as special, and sometimes we talk about what makes it so. We all know what Sonning Common isn't: quaint, historic, twee, classic English chocolate box pretty. But what is distinctive about it, when – in terms of its appearance – it is so undistinctive?*

Part of the answer, of course, is its setting. It is enclosed by English countryside at its most deeply satisfying: that composition of green fields, woods, copses, winding lanes, gates, dry valleys and upslopes with sudden views and surprising disclosures that are put together and are so deeply soothing and healing to the soul.

We know how lucky we are in that respect. As for the village, it WORKS. It spreads without sprawling. It is tightly enough woven together to promote neighbourliness while remaining spacious and tree-shaded. It has dwellings of just about every kind and people to match. It has everything you could need in terms of shops and services, and treasures – the Millennium Green, the Memorial Park, Widmore Pond, Old Copse Wood spring to mind – which are not strictly speaking necessary but spiritually indispensable.

We are lucky and we know we are lucky. The question for all us should be: what can we do to make sure that this Sonning Common of ours retains its uniqueness for the generations to come?

That question was faced eleven years ago by a group of volunteers who saw clearly that the single greatest threat to our village lay in pressure for new housing. That group spent five long and arduous years giving Sonning Common its Neighbourhood Development Plan. In my view our NDP has been like our Magna Carta – the nearest we could get to a statutory protection for the things about Sonning Common we hold most dear.

It came into force in 2016 and two years later I and a second group of volunteers – several of whom had also served the first-time round – got together to revise our NDP. That document is now ready to be put to the verdict of the residents in a referendum which will take place on 23 February 2023.

I am not going to pretend that this revision is all we hoped for when we began work. It is a long way from that. Our main priorities were to identify sites where the smaller family houses so desperately needed to keep the village viable and vibrant could be built; and somewhere for apartments with extra-care facilities for people who wanted to downsize but continue to live in the village. We largely failed in both these objectives. It was not our fault – our revision was overtaken by the agonising saga of the Little Sparrows 'retirement village' which meant we no longer had a statutory housing requirement to meet.

However, life is full of setbacks and we carried on determined to rescue everything we could from our original intentions. Now the work is done.

The new plan is ready, and my call to the readers of the magazine and to every voter in Sonning Common is to get behind it. It may not be perfect, but it is a million times better than no plan. It will give the village protection against the kind of rampant development that for so long has threatened to devour our precious countryside setting. It includes a set of environment measures fit for the times we live in – including a policy to enshrine Old Copse Field as public open space.

There are a host of other provisions that reflect our view of how Sonning Common should move ahead – affecting health and leisure, transport, parking and much else – without losing its essential character. As we reach the end of a very long road, I would like to pay a heartfelt tribute to those who have worked so hard to make this possible – Barry Greenwood (the original working party chairman), Diana Pearman, Leigh Rawlins, Julia Whitelaw, Alastair Morris, Ros Varnes, and the new members who came on board for the revision: Mike and Sheelagh Bowker, Derek Wilmot and Stewart Woolfrey.

To them I say Thank you. To everyone else I say: if you care about Sonning Common and what happens to it in the years to come, take the trouble to have a look at the revised plan and on 23 Feb get down to the Village Hall to register your vote.

**An exhibition of the plan will be in the village hall on Friday 17 February and a copy is on the SC website ●**

TOM FORT

[www.scpc-ndp.co.uk](http://www.scpc-ndp.co.uk)



# POLICIES FOR NDP

by Diana Pearman

Agreement for the settlement boundary is crucial if we are to retain our status as a village. Many meetings have been held with residents over the last 7 years or so and this message comes across loud and clear.

The policies from the review of our Neighbourhood Plan have been extracted in the following summary. The full plan can be viewed on the website.

**Policy RSB1 - The defined settlement boundary for Sonning Common** is shown on the map alongside.

Development proposals within the defined settlement boundary will be supported, provided they accord with the other policies of the development plan.

**Policy RSB2 - Open green spaces**

Open green spaces, the Millennium Green and valued woodland that lie within settlement boundary will be protected from development.

**Policy RH1 - Allocated new housing SON 24** as a continuing care retirement community care village (Use Class C2) of up to 133 units with ancillary communal and care facilities and green space.

**SON 15** Chiltern Edge Top 50 homes with provision for key workers.

**Policy RH2** - One-, two-, and three-bedroom homes and proposals that meet specialist need such as assisted living accommodation will be supported.

**Policy RH3 - Infill development**

Criteria include amenity, layout, density, visual intrusion, emissions and so on.

**Policy RH4** - Garden spacing - New developments with gardens backing on to or beside existing gardens should, wherever practicable, share boundaries with the adjacent gardens.

**Policy RH5 - Affordable housing**

| Tenure                                    | South Oxfordshire |
|---|-------------------|
| First Homes                               | 25%               |
| Social Rent                               | 35%               |
| Affordable Rent                           | 25%               |
| Other routes to affordable home ownership | 15%               |

**Policy RD1 - Design**

Good quality design, energy efficiency, water conservation, electric charging points and solar panels.

**Policy RD2 - Building heights**

New buildings should be no more than 2 storeys.

**Policy RD3 - Village character**

Design respects the existing character of the village.

**Policy RD4 - Street scene**

Relates to established plot widths.

**Policy RE1a - Existing employment areas**

Retain and establish new employment site.

**Policy RE1b - Small business park**

Intense use of the small business park known as Kidby's Yard.

**Policy RCSH1 - Public services**

Enhance local public services and community services, library, the Village Hall, Health centre, Dental surgery and the bus service.

**Policy RCSH2 - Schools**

Update and improve Sonning Common Primary School and Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge Academy.

**Policy RCSH3 - Memorial Park**

Enhanced recreation and sports uses on the Memorial Park will be supported.

**Policy RTP1 - Parking**

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals to improve and rationalise parking provisions will be supported where they otherwise conform with Oxfordshire County Council's parking standards.

**Policy RTP2 - Footpaths and cycleways**

Proposals for the provision or improvement of footpaths and cycle ways will be supported.

**Policy RTP3 - Road safety**

For pedestrians, cyclists and other road users and speed restrictions.

**Policy RENV1 - Green Infrastructure**

Green infrastructure and enhanced biodiversity will be supported.

**Policy RENV2 - Valued Landscapes locally**

To be conserved and enhanced, especially AONB.

**Policy RENV3 - Trees and hedgerows**

Avoid the unnecessary loss of mature and veteran trees, hedgerows, orchards or wildlife corridors.

**Policy RENV4 - Landscaping**

Provision of trees, shrubs and hedging in keeping with local character.

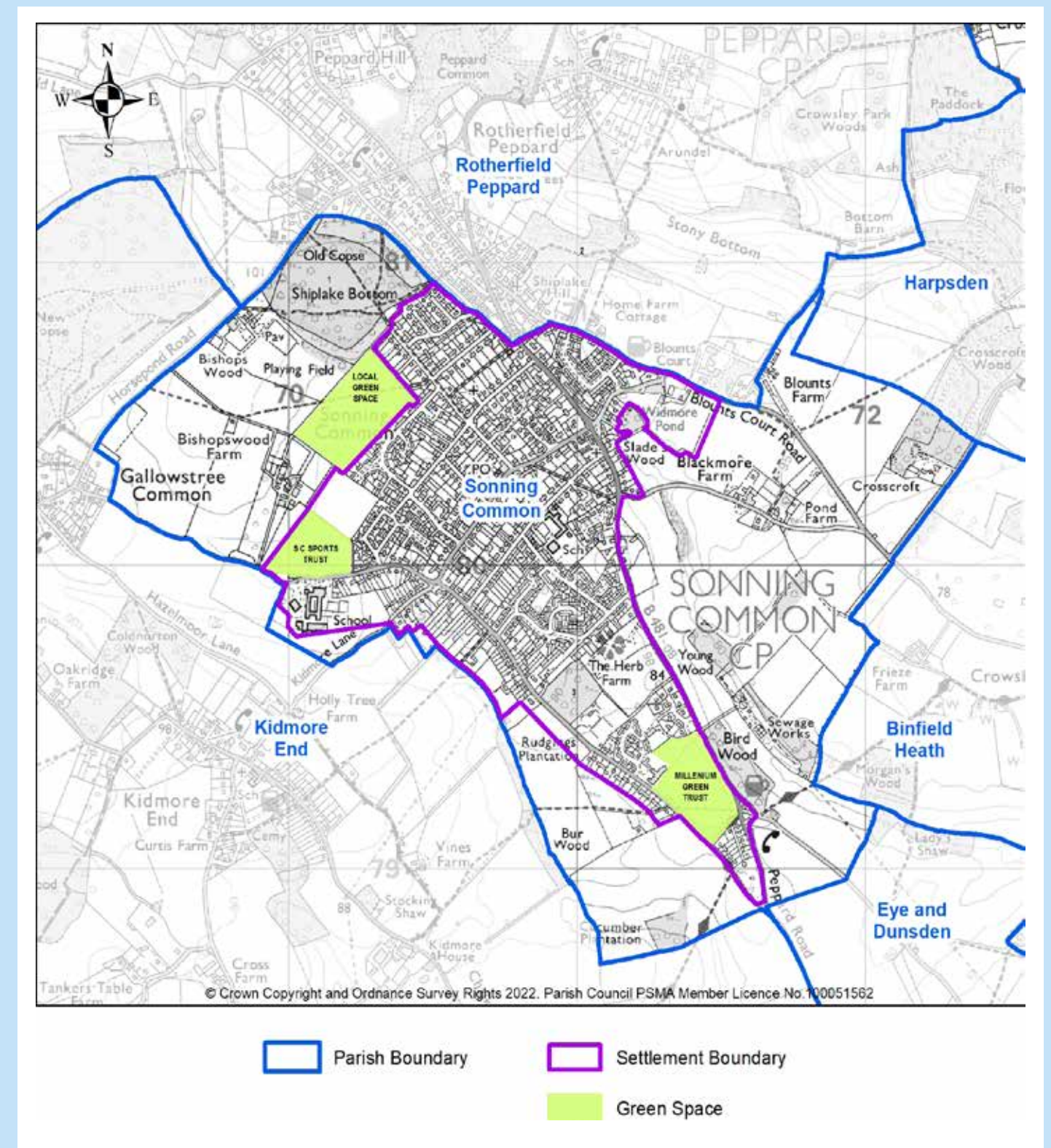
**Policy RENV5 - Climate Change**

Use of renewable energy and the adoption of sustainable drainage systems.

**Policy RENV6 - Local Green Space**

Old Copse Field designated.

Please remember to register your vote at the Village Hall on February 23rd





# MEET FRED NICKSON

## AN EXTRAORDINARY LOCAL BUSINESSMAN AND VOLUNTEER



Fred Nickson will be a familiar face to many living in Sonning Common and Peppard. He has worked enormously hard for the community as a driver for and Chairman of Fish Volunteer Centre, as Trustee of the Ways and Means Trust, a Parish Councillor and as a very successful Fund Raiser for all these organisations.

Fred was born in Ascot and grew up there with three sisters. His parents had to move their business out of London during the war and never went back. When he left school Fred did an apprenticeship in the motor industry and his adventurous spirit took him to Australia on a £10 ticket. This enabled him to work there very successfully for three years as a sales representative for an American Company in Australia and Papua New Guinea: this was an enormous amount of territory to cover but he very much liked the work and travel. After three years he decided to take some leave and visit his family back home. In 1967 an open ticket enabled him to travel widely to get home and he even managed to fly into Cairo during the Six Day War. The

airport authorities did not know what to do with him when his plane landed, so he ended up spending two days imprisoned at the airport with another person who fortunately could speak Arabic. After two days he managed to get a flight to Amsterdam and hitched a lift to Brussels where an aunt lived - but he lacked money and a passport when he arrived.

Fred had nothing when he got back to Ascot to see his family, and he was invited to run the church Youth Club - something he had done before. He declined this offer because his intention was to get back to Australia, but fate intervened, and he went along to help at a Jumble Sale raising funds for a new table tennis table. It was there that he met his wife Sue - the best bargain of his life! They were married eighteen months later and now have two daughters and four grandchildren.

Fred and Sue settled in Peppard for thirty-three years and he travelled extensively dealing with precious metals for the dental industry. He ended up as Managing Director of the company, but Sales, Marketing and travelling were very stressful, so he decided to branch out into something completely different and resigned his Directorship. He leased a shop in Caversham and Nickson's Country Clothing started up and this soon developed into a mail order business for specialist country clothing. The Foot and Mouth Epidemic had a profound effect on the business however, so Fred turned the shop into an Antique Centre and when the lease came up for renewal several years later, he decided it was time to retire.

Retirement did not suit Fred and after five weeks he was looking for something useful to do. A notice on the board outside the Sonning Common Parish office caught Fred's eye. It wanted volunteer drivers for the FISH Volunteer Centre minibus and Fred was welcomed with open arms and was on the road the next day. He loved driving the bus and even began the Mystery Tea Tours which became very popular indeed. Fred eventually became chairman of FISH for five years when he was unable to drive because of eye problems. The FISH office at that time was in a tiny room at the back of Sonning Common Village Hall and Fred was instrumental in moving it to new and larger premises at the Old Doctors Surgery and fund raising to buy a much-needed new minibus. His business background enabled him to regularise donations, fund raise and ensure finances were on a secure footing. Monthly tea parties became standardised and chiropody treatments were introduced and were very much welcomed by the local community.

Fred has still not retired and is now active as a Trustee of the Ways and Means Trust. The valuable work being done at Greenshoots in Peppard is a cause very close to his heart. He did not forget his fund-raising background and recently also helped raise the funds to buy the new FISH offices in Lea Road. This very busy and colourful character now lives and works from home in Sonning Common and runs a business called Henley Antiques buying jewellery, watches, silver and scientific instruments. His energy, resourcefulness and business acumen have proved huge assets in his work for the local community and we wish him and Sue well on their future travels. ●

# LOCAL NWR GROUP SUPPORTS MAKING STRIDES TOGETHER



In glorious sunshine during the second week in October, the Sonning Common NWR Group joined in with members from all over the UK, in the first two weeks of October, for the inaugural NWR Walk - Making Strides Together. NWR had called on groups nationwide to go out for a walk and send them the total miles walked by each member (so every step did indeed count).

Groups could decide when, where and how far they walked. Throughout the fortnight we heard, via email updates and in the NWR Facebook Group for members, about the walks of other groups - where they had been, what

they had seen - which made for interesting reading. We were also given regular updates on the number of miles the members had collectively walked, which mounted up very quickly. By day two of the fortnight members had collectively walked 127.5 miles, roughly equivalent to the entire length of the River Ouse in Yorkshire, by day four members had walked the length of the UK and by day eight they'd (collectively) almost walked back again. At the end of the fortnight the total miles collectively walked was 5,127 miles.

Our local Sonning Common Group enjoyed two walks along the riverside at Henley, contributing a modest 25 miles to the overall total and enjoying a break at the Chocolate Cafe for a hot chocolate and a chat.

NWR is a national organisation bringing women together for lively discussion, friendship and fun. The Sonning Common Group have been meeting in and around the area for over 40 years! To discover more about NWR, visit the National website, [www.nwr.org.uk](http://www.nwr.org.uk), or call our Local Organiser, Sue Williams on 0118 924 2521. We are always happy to welcome new members. ●



**NWR - National Women's Register - social organisation for women**

NWR is an organisation for all women. Our lively minded members are interested in everything and talk about anything.

[www.nwr.org.uk](http://www.nwr.org.uk)



# WI TO CELEBRATE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF COFFEE MORNINGS

Sonning Common WI has been hosting Village Coffee Mornings for a number of years now, and the event reaches its 10th anniversary in March this year. From small beginnings, these monthly events have become a regular feature on the

village's social calendar, and the monies raised have benefitted a number of local charities and other good causes over the years. The anniversary milestone will be marked by an extra-special Coffee Morning taking place on Wednesday

1 March (10-12). Representatives from some of the charities have been invited, and will have the opportunity to say a few words to highlight the good work they do.

ALISON BISHOP



# REMEMBERING

On Sunday 13 November 2022 some 40 residents of Sonning Common, both young and old, paid their respects to all who had given their lives in the two world wars and in all conflicts fought since then in our country's name. The simple ceremony took place outside the Village Hall and was led by Lieutenant Commanders Alexander and Gillian Manning of Reade's Lane, both retired members of the forces. Among those paying their respects were Dr Vera Morris, a former Head at Chiltern Edge, Graham Lyke, a former Deputy Head and members of Sonning Common Parish Council, joined by Chairman John Stoves and his wife Jo after they had attended Kidmore End's church service and remembrance ceremony.

Alex served for seven years in the Royal Marines and then for twenty more in the Royal Navy, spending nearly half that time back with the Royal Marines but also qualifying as a Minewarfare and Clearance Diving Officer, in which capacity he served in the Falklands War in 1982. Gillian was a member of the Royal Naval Reserve for twenty-five years and was awarded the MBE in recognition of her outstanding service.

Specifically remembered and honoured were the three local men who had given their lives: Private Francis Frederick ("Fred") Slough, 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment, killed in the final battle of the Falklands War aged just 19.

Private Cyrus Thatcher, 2nd Battalion The Rifles, killed in Afghanistan in 2009, also aged 19 and Sergeant Barry Weston, 40 Commando, Royal Marines, killed in Afghanistan in 2011, aged 40 and leaving a wife and three children. All three had attended what was then Chiltern Edge School, now Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge, while village lads Fred and Barry (Cyrus was from Caversham) had also attended Sonning Common Primary School.

The simple ceremony began with Alex and Gillian jointly reading a moving

poem called "Why Do You March Old Man?" Gillian then sounded the "Still" on a naval bosun's call (whistle) and spoke the traditional Homage ("They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old..."). The two-minute silence that followed was then ended by her sounding the "Carry On" and Alex reciting the Kohima Epitaph ("When you go home tell them of us and say, that for your tomorrow we gave our today"). Sue Hedges of Sonning Common Women's Institute then unveiled the poppy wreath that surrounds the already-existing memorial to Fred Slough just inside the Village Hall. This wreath, of over a hundred knitted poppies, was made in 2018 by the ladies of the SCWI, with any faded poppies replaced each year.

Alex then spoke a few words that, among other things, recalled Fred, Cyrus and Barry and emphasised that Remembrance Sunday was about exactly that - remembrance and respect, not glorification of war or anything like it. He and Gillian then ended the ceremony by jointly reading a very poignant second poem titled "Why Are They Selling Poppies Mummy?". Everyone then repaired inside the hall for tea, coffee and delicious cake prepared and served by the ladies of the WI and over which many memories were shared. The over £50 given as donations will be passed on to the Kidmore End and District Branch of the Royal British Legion. ●

Alex Manning



## A POEM FOR REMEMBRANCE DAY



Why are they selling poppies, Mummy?  
Selling poppies in town today.  
The poppies, child, are flowers of love  
For the men who marched away.

But why have they chosen a poppy, Mummy?  
Why not a beautiful rose?  
Because, my child, men fought and died  
In the fields where the poppies grow.

But why are the poppies so red, Mummy?  
Why are the poppies so red?  
Red is the colour of blood, my child,  
The blood that our soldiers shed.

The heart of the poppy is black, Mummy,  
Why does it have to be black?  
Black, my child, is the symbol of grief  
For the men who never came back.

But why, Mummy, are you crying so?  
Your tears are giving you pain.  
My tears are my fears for you, my child,  
For the world is forgetting again.

(Author unknown)

## RETURN TO THE FALKLANDS AND A POIGNANT DISCOVERY

**Alex and Gillian Manning returned just in time for Christmas from a Hurtigruten expedition cruise to Antarctica and the Falkland Islands with, as you would expect, a host of wonderful memories. Already the trip of a lifetime for them, the final leg in and around the Falklands, however, contained an additional wholly unexpected and meaningful surprise.**

As for many veterans of the short but very sharp war that saw the Falklands freed from Argentine invasion and occupation in 1982, the islands and their people have held a special place in Alex's heart ever since. "I've never forgotten what it feels like to be greeted by our own people as a liberator," he says. "And 40 years still just feels like 40 minutes. When I went back 20 years ago, I was pleased to see how much the islands had developed and prospered, and to have seen how much they've continued to prosper pleases me even more. It means it hadn't all been in vain. It meant a lot to me to be there again and with the help of a friend I'd stayed in touch with I was able to hire a driver and vehicle to take us on a private tour to places that had special meaning for me." Among these was San Carlos Water, on the north-

west side of East Falkland, where the initial landings were made in 1982 and the Amphibious Task Group (which included Alex in HMS Intrepid) rode out the repeated counterattacks by the Argentine Air Force. On the shore of the inlet, at the small San Carlos Settlement, is also, now, the official British cemetery built after the war. Known as Blue Beach Cemetery, after the code-name for the beach over which the very first landing was made, it is only a small one, containing just 15 graves, mostly of Royal Marines and Paras who's next of kin had elected to have them remain in the Falklands rather than be brought home (many others, of course, have no grave but the sea).

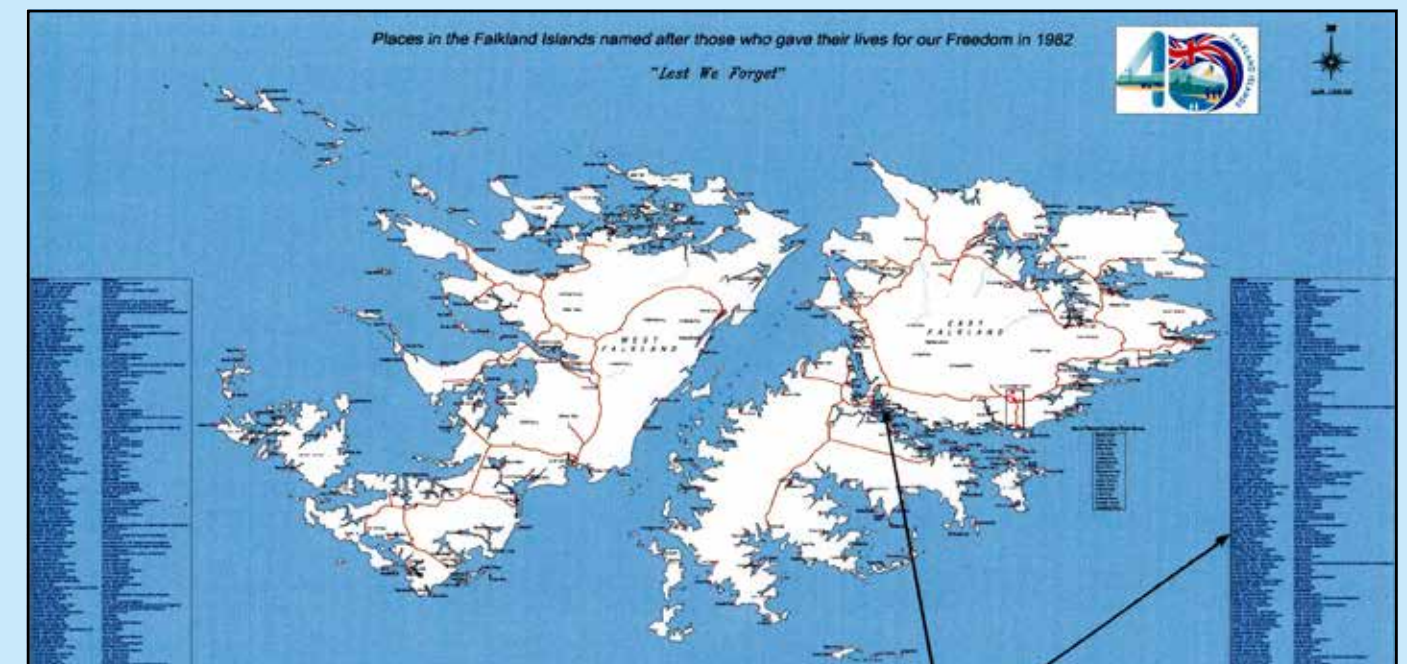
While paying their respects, however, Alex and Gillian were stopped dead in their tracks on seeing that one of the Parachute Regiment graves was that of none other than Private Francis Frederick ("Fred") Slough, formerly of Sonning Common and Chiltern Edge School, as it then was, whose memory we honour on Remembrance Sunday each year at the village hall, along with that of Cyrus Thatcher and Barry Weston, killed later in Afghanistan. Fred was killed, aged just

19, in the small hours of 14 June 1982 on Wireless Ridge, a feature directly opposite Stanley itself, in the very last battle of the war. Its capture sealed the fate of the Argentine garrison, and they surrendered later that same day. Alex says: "I had no idea until then that Fred's was one of the graves there and to realise, I was actually standing over his remains and no longer simply honouring him from 8,000 miles away each November moved us greatly. Some dust and strong wind in my eyes, shall we say."

Last year, on the 40th anniversary of the Falklands War, the still-grateful people of the Falkland Islands named 255 of their previously un-named small islands, bays, hills and other geographical features in honour of those who gave their lives to restore their freedom from Argentine occupation in 1982. Slough Islet, in Choiseul Sound, thus bears Fred Slough's name in perpetuity.

The map (the much larger original is in Stanley Museum) shows where it is and his place on the Roll of Honour. ●

Alex Manning



In 2022, the 40th anniversary of the Falklands War, the still grateful people of the Falkland Islands named 255 of their previously un-named islands, bays, hills and other geographical features in honour of those who gave their lives to restore their freedom from Argentine occupation in 1982. Slough Islet, in Choiseul Sound, thus bears Fred Slough's name in perpetuity.



# SONIA SILVA

## A REMARKABLE YOUNG WOMAN



The manager of Abbeycrest Nursing Home, Sonning Common has celebrated the 10th anniversary of her arrival.

Sonia Da Silva, 32, who came from Portugal to work at Abbeycrest in 2012, was presented with chocolates, wine and food by staff. She also received a long service certificate from a regional manager at Caring Homes Group, which owns the home in Essex Way, off Kennylands Road. Sonia said "It was so nice of my colleagues to do this. Being a part of this team has been amazing."

She had decided she wanted to care for other people when she was 15 and went to visit her grandfather in hospital where he was having a heart operation. She trained as a nurse and had just qualified when she left her home near Porto to come to Britain.

Sonia was surprised "It was a two-hour flight to Gatwick on a sunny afternoon. England wasn't as grey as I was expecting." She was picked up from the airport by a member of staff at the home and taken to staff accommodation in Reading.

She was "trembling", adding: "I was overwhelmed but welcomed by my colleagues. I was received with a smile, and I felt their warmth. It still took me a few months to feel confident and integrated — it was a gradual process of adaptation to this new life. I had left behind my family, who are so important to me, but I never thought about going back. Even though there were hard times and I started out feeling alone, I never felt like giving up."

Sonia gradually worked her way up and completed a National Vocational Qualification in leadership and management in 2016. The same year, she was promoted to clinical services manager and bought her own flat in Reading. She said: "I grabbed every opportunity I could to grow and develop professionally and this was with the help of the learning and development team, who are fantastic and very supportive."

In March 2020 she was appointed manager of Abbeycrest, yet another challenge as this marked the start of the first coronavirus pandemic lockdown. The restrictions meant she had to manage a lot of change at the home and all the staff had to adapt to a new way of working. She had to deal with the "emotional challenge" of stopping visits by the families of residents and plan for them to have video calls instead. "It all

happened so quickly, and no one was prepared for something like that on both a personal and professional level. We had covid outbreaks in the home and we had to deal with that and with staff shortages".

"What I learned from that whole experience is how powerful great teamwork is. We supported each other even in moments that we were feeling down, we just kept each other going. When residents had to be in isolation, staff would sing and dance outside their rooms to give them some sort of entertainment so they wouldn't feel so isolated. I learn something every day here and many of those things I will carry for the rest of my life. I strive to build strong relationships and like to put a smile on the residents' faces and always receive one in return". Sonia recounted.

"Everyone has a story to tell, and I love to listen to their stories. I loved my job from the moment I realised that every simple gesture could make a better day for my residents. I feel very lucky to have a good team around me. There is a lot of emotion in this job, but I try to pass on to my staff that we need to be there and lift each other and make use of the skills of everyone."

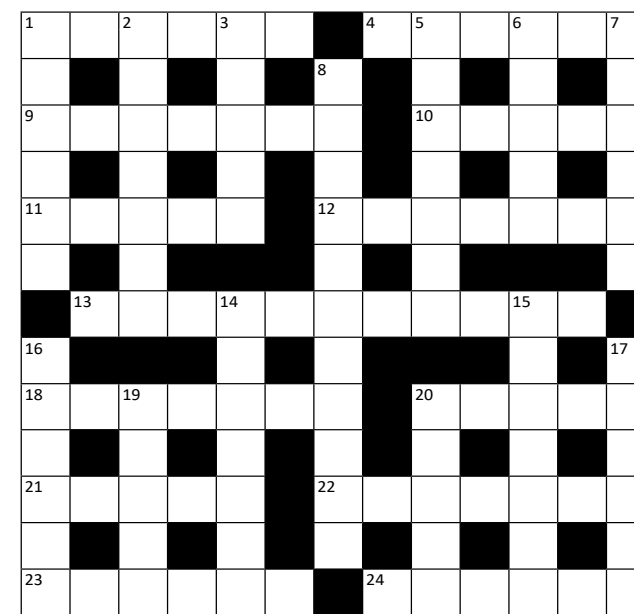
"When I look back on my 10 years here, I feel so fulfilled with all I've learned and the amount I've grown and matured, both professionally and emotionally" she reflected. ●

**GEORGE KING**  
Customer Relationship Manager

# PUZZLE PAGE

By **DAVID DUNSTAN**

## Cryptic crossword



## ACROSS

- New dog with no head for pasta (6)
- 4&10. Bar well-known family (6,5)
- To which wet hero resorted (7)
- See 4 (5)
- Jog naked around grounds initially (5)
- Hangs around lake with confused Tories (7)
- Revive sister with acute complications (11)
- Blushing cat is a 4 (3,4)
- Reef maker is vocal after cold (5)
- Aid arranged with hard old state (5)
- 22&24. Enshroud a hand drunkenly in a 4 (4,3,6)
- Country for a man and a new adult (6)
- See 22 (6)

## DOWN

- Wine cocktail with new name is a 4 (3,3)
- Madly devour energy to be late (7)
- Lord of city in Belgium (5)
- Strangely, I push to raise (7)
- See! Employ mean person (5)
- See hazily following revolutionary in Cheshire, for example (6)
- Article in Scotch ale cocktail for primitive fish (11)
- 4 found in Punic or Numidian texts (7)
- Trainer damaged in the ground (7)
- Female tearful, losing head and cooking (7)
- Random gales around German clearings (6)
- Attack reversed with unknown journal (5)
- Load vehicle before turn (5)

## Sudoku

Grading: easy-medium

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 6 |   |   |   |   | 2 |   |   |   |  |
|   | 9 |   | 7 | 2 | 5 |   |   |   |  |
| 3 |   |   | 4 |   |   |   |   | 8 |  |
| 1 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 8 |   |   |   |   |  |
| 5 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 |  |
|   |   |   |   | 9 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 4 |  |
| 9 |   |   |   |   | 8 |   |   | 6 |  |
|   |   | 6 |   | 1 | 4 |   | 8 |   |  |
|   |   | 8 |   |   |   |   |   | 2 |  |

## Cryptogram

The following quotation has been encoded using a simple letter substitution. What does it say?

RMS NEU HMI PSELT UIRMAUD ER EWW AT  
GSRRSP SLOJERSL RMEU RMS NEU HMI  
PSELT UIRMAUD GOR USHTCECSPT. –  
RMINET FSBBSPTIU

## Quiz: One-letter answers

- E is to W as S is to what?
- A series of vitamins including niacin and riboflavin.
- Ford's best-selling car – the Model what?
- The person who invents gadgets for James Bond.
- A 1990s TV show: The ... Files.
- The chemical symbol for Potassium.
- Franklin Roosevelt's middle initial.
- 50 in Roman numerals.
- In music it means "soft".
- 1,000 in common speech (e.g. distances, money).



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# SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE

## Staff news

A new Receptionist, Anne, who started with us in January. We are all looking forward to welcoming her to the team.

Congratulations to Sana and Chandni our GP registrars who have successfully completed their final RCA exams - well done.

## A very big thank you

Thank you to all of the volunteers who gave up their time to help us with our COVID and flu vaccine clinics. Volunteers supported for all stages from meeting and greeting through to vaccinators, and without their help

we wouldn't have been able to run as many clinics or vaccinated as many patients.

## Flu Vaccination Update

Flu vaccination appointments are still available if required.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO WEAR A MASK** when visiting the health centre.

Covid-19 cases are extremely high in South Oxfordshire at the time of writing (towards the end of December), these cases are generally mild. ●



# KEEPING WARM AND WELL THIS WINTER

It is important to stay healthy this winter with many viruses in the community as this is the first winter without Covid restrictions in 2 years.

Colds and flu affect older people more than the younger population.

**Make sure you have your flu jab, it isn't too late.**

Be prepared, have a supply of cold and sore throat medication. Your local pharmacy can advise you.

Make sure you have adequate medication on prescription. You can order this online using the NHS app <http://www.nhs.uk/nhsapp> or Patient Access <https://www.patientaccess.com> or put your repeat medication form in the letterbox at the Health Centre.

If you need urgent advice and the Health Centre and Pharmacy are closed call NHS111.

## Eat a hot meal and enjoy warm drinks

It's a good idea to keep your cupboards stocked with some basics just in case you can't get out to the shops - whether due to illness or weather conditions.

## Keep warm at home

Ideally 21 degrees during the day. Don't sit still for more than an hour; walk about if you are able and maybe add simple chair-based exercises you can add to your daily routine. Try to heat your home to a steady and comfortable temperature throughout the day in the rooms you use most, such as the living room and bedroom. If there are rooms you don't use, like a spare bedroom, turn off the radiators here and close the doors. This will help you save on energy costs while keeping warm.

The Parish Council has designated warm space in the library. Free and open to all. Check opening times on page 33.

## Wrap up well

Wearing plenty of layers is the best way to keep warm in winter. If you're heading out, make sure you take some extra layers - even if you don't need them immediately, it's a good idea to be prepared because the temperature can drop significantly when the weather is bad.

## Stop the spread of germs

Regularly washing your hands with soap and water is one of the best ways to stop germs from spreading. It's a good idea

to keep some antibacterial gel with you when you're out and about.

## The cold puts more pressure on our hearts and circulation

The cold can increase the risk of a stroke or heart attack, as well as hypothermia. If you suspect you, or someone else, is experiencing any of these, call **999** or **112** from a mobile immediately.

## For a stroke, think FAST:

**F** - is the **face** on one side?

**A** - can the person raise both **arms** and keep them there?

**S** - is **speech** slurred?

**T** - **time** to call 999 if you spot any one of these signs.

Many people experience severe chest pain during a **heart attack** - but the symptoms can be different for different people.

**Hypothermia** is a medical emergency, just like a stroke or a heart attack.

Call 111 for non-emergency health advice. In an emergency, call 999 (or 112 from a mobile). ●

Sue Litchfield for SCHC



# BRENDA DAMP

## A CREDIT TO THE VILLAGE



Brenda Damp, who lived and worked in Sonning Common from 1957 until 1995, passed away on 7 November, aged 93, in Axminster, Devon. She had lived there with two of her daughters, Fiona and Caroline, who cared for her until the end of her long life in their shared home. She had moved from Sonning Common to Portscatho Cornwall in 1995, after retiring that year. Her husband, Graham had died in 1989.

Brenda was a tireless worker within our village. She had trained as a librarian and, of course, loved books and reading. She worked as librarian at Chiltern Edge School (now Maiden Erlegh) from 1970 to 1992. All four of her daughters were educated locally, Gillian, Susan, Fiona and Caroline and they remember her as a strong supporter of all their various interests and talents.

Within the village, Brenda will be remembered for her efficiency and community involvement, with her many interests and activities. She together with Mary Osers, were joint editor of our village magazine in its early days and she also helped in the Grove Road Library.

She had a great love of music and sang in the church choir at Peppard Church for many years where she and husband Graham were churchwardens. Brenda was fully involved with Gwyn Arch's choral society, fulfilling many roles on its committee. She joined in 1957 and was one of its earliest long-running members, travelling widely with his choir. When Graham was our parish clerk, Brenda was his secretary. When he died, she fulfilled that role herself. She retired from all community work in 1995, when she moved

to Cornwall, which she loved.

Through all this time, as the village grew, many housing estates emerged. She and her friends helped raise money for many charities including the village hall and primary school swimming pool, holding many a jumble sale – lining up (literally) a mile of pennies (old-style!) – and numerous bring-and-buy sales. FISH and SCOPE, too, kept them very busy,

Above all else, she was a great friend, a helpful neighbour, a credit to the village and will be greatly missed by friends and family.

Her ashes will be interred with husband Graham's at All Saints' Church in Spring 2023.

Visit Brenda's remembrance page, organized by the funeral directors, if you wish to make donations to the Macular Society in her name: <https://brendadamp.muchloved.com/>

Alternatively, you can donate to the Woodland Trust: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/give/donations/>

PAULINE TWYMAN

# SUE BADNELL

## A LOVELY LADY WHO WAS AN EXCELLENT TEACHER

Sue Badnell sadly passed away on the 27 December 2022. She was just 81 years old, having celebrated her birthday a few days earlier

Sue and her husband Alan moved into the house next door to us with their small daughter Philippa. Very soon after they moved in Alison was born. We were invited to see the two hours old Alison and were asked if we would be her God parents. We were delighted to accept.

The village primary school had grown hugely in numbers due to the building of some housing estates during the 1970's. More than three classrooms were quickly erected and the headmaster Mr. Johnson who had been a Spitfire pilot during the war, heard of Sue Badnell's teacher qualifications and persuaded her to join the teaching staff. To enable her to do so she was promised a place in the infant class for Philippa and a one in the nursery class for baby Alison. To begin with she taught for half days.

Sonning Common primary school was a happy, friendly place, where children did their growing up, and we as teachers were lucky to share in their developing skills to become sensible children. We enjoyed meeting their parents who trusted us with their precious boys and girls.

Mrs Bagnall was a first-class teacher and I was the lucky teacher to have the class she had taught for a year move up the following year to me. I felt gifted to receive a well behaved, disciplined class. She was full of energy, and she took over the girls' netball team and was rewarded in return by their enthusiasm. She will be remembered by some of her former pupils and their parents I am sure.

Sue loved all animals large and small. With Alan she moved into another house in Kennylands, called Alpen Rose. It had more land where they could keep their donkey Kate, plus a pony. Also they could breed from their lovely Labrador and many people in Sonning common bought their puppies. I still meet the children we taught all those years ago – now parents themselves with grown up children.

Some years later Sue and her husband moved to a cottage in Devon which had even more land! Here they bought sheep, learned how to shear them, then washed and spun the wool. Sue encouraged the local retired people to join them at their home. She taught them how to spin the wool, the art of weaving, crocheting and of course knitting! So, she continued her teaching for several years – what a girl!!

It was Alison, my grown up God daughter who gave me the sad news of heat of Sue's death. The news saddened me greatly, because beside being a teaching colleague, she and I had shared a great friendship for many years and such friendships are very precious and the memories last forever. ●

MARGARET FIELDHOUSE



# TWENTY IS PLENTY

The 20mph signs are now erected across the village. Please encourage others to travel at this speed to keep us all safe.



## DID YOU KNOW?

# SIGN UP FOR LOW-COST BROADBAND

citizens  
advice

Citizens Advice Henley has expressed concern that people in need are not taking advantage of cheap broadband and mobile phone schemes set up specially to help them. Loosely termed "social tariffs" or "essential broadband", these schemes are discounted deals intended for those on Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, and some other benefits.

Statistics show that only 1.2% of those eligible to register for these low tariffs have done so, although they could save

over £100 a year. Social tariffs are provided in the same way as normal phone and Internet packages, but at a lower price. Network providers liaise with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to ascertain customers' eligibility, and the DWP is required to provide only the necessary information, so that personal information remains safe.

At the time of writing, not all telecom companies offer social tariffs but it is possible for those who qualify to switch to a supplier that does provide them. The

usual fees for switching contracts, leaving a contract early or terminating them have in many cases been scrapped for those on benefits who qualify for these tariffs – but check with your supplier to make sure.

More information is available on the Citizens Advice website <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk> or you can call Adviceline on 0808 278 7907. You can also go to <https://www.gov.uk> and search for "cheaper broadband" or to <https://www.ofcom.org.uk> (search "social tariffs").



# Church news

## ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

It was good to be able to be able to celebrate Advent and Christmas without any restrictions this year. There was a very generous response to our Advent Tree appeal. Donated gifts were distributed to the sick and housebound of the parish, with the majority being given to CIRDIC in Reading to help those who are homeless. We continue to collaborate with the other local churches to ensure those in need are helped by the foodbank. During Advent we ran a four-part video course to help us reflect on certain aspects of our Christian faith as part of our Christmas preparation. People braved the freezing weather to attend.

The church was full to capacity for the early Christmas Eve Mass for families with young children. It was lovely to see the children taking on the roles of Mary, Joseph, shepherds and angels as the Christmas gospel was read. The later Mass, preceded by carols by candlelight, was also very well attended. Quite a few people preferred to attend one of the Christmas Day Masses instead. It was a delight to be able to welcome many visitors as well as regular members of our community to celebrate Christmas together in St Michael's. The YouTube streaming of our Masses proved popular over the Christmas period.

At the time of writing we are still in the Christmas season, so no thought as yet has been given to Lent that begins on 22nd February, Ash Wednesday. Please check our website to see if there are any activities that interest you. We are also looking forward to the Christian Unity service taking place in St John's.

Our First Holy Communion programme will have just started. If there are any Catholic children, not attending St Martin's our primary school, who wish to participate please contact the parish office. If you know of any Catholics who are housebound or are in a carehome and would like Holy Communion to be brought to them please let us know.

If you want to know what is going on check the weekly newsletter on our website: [www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk](http://www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk)

## SPRINGWATER

At Springwater we had a lovely carol service on the Friday evening before Christmas and an amazing turnout for our short celebration on Christmas morning. Since then we have had our ever popular New Year Brunch: 'full English' and a good walk afterwards (for those who were up to it!).

All the usual activities are up and running, like The Ark, parent and toddler group, Aspire the women's gathering, Compassionate Loaf on Monday mornings - come and join in, it's great fun whether you have loads or no experience at all, The Steering Wheel Fellowship and The Community Food Bank continues to help many local people.

We would love to see you on a Sunday morning at 10.30, adults and children, to join us in worshipping our dear Lord Jesus and for coffee afterwards. God bless you.

Chris Girdler

[www.springwaterchurch.org.uk](http://www.springwaterchurch.org.uk)  
Tel: 01189724519

## LOVE

Valentine's Day is on the horizon - an opportunity for us to give and receive a message of love from a secret (or not so secret!) admirer. Will the postie bring you an unexpected card on the 14th?!

You might feel secretly delighted to hear that someone else loves you; but how much more amazing to find out that God loves you. How could you know that he really does?

The Bible says 'God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners Christ died for us'.

It's not hard to love a friend; but the unexpected message of the Bible is that God loves you and me. He has shown his love by sending his Son to die in order to rescue us, even while we live as his enemies. You can be sure that God loves you deeply when you think about the cross on which Jesus died. Valentine's Day is on the horizon - and so is Easter.

At Chiltern Evangelical Church we want to love Jesus, love each other, and love our neighbours. Please come and join us at 4.30pm on Sunday afternoons, or at any of our activities on our website.

<https://cecuk.church/>

Martin Secombe

## ST JOHN THE BAPTIST AND CHRIST THE KING

What joy it was to see so many in our churches over Christmas! St John the Baptist and Christ the King welcomed those from our local communities, as well as visitors from further afield, for the Parish Carol Service, Christingle

event, and services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day - a welcome return to 'the norm'.

Now we look ahead with hope to 2023, with a regular service pattern in place once again. From the beginning of January, both churches have returned to a morning Eucharist service each week - Christ the King at 9.30am and St John's at the slightly revised time of 11.15am (this is to allow the Rector time for a quick coffee and chat with the CTK congregation, before heading off to Kidmore End). Evensong is held at St John's once a month at 6.00pm and a Service of the Word (non-Eucharist) at CTK on third Sundays (9.30am): please check [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) for further information and to confirm service dates and times.

We begin the season of Lent on Wednesday 22nd February, with a Benefice service for Ash Wednesday at All Saints', Peppard, at 7.30pm. Mothering Sunday falls on Sunday 19th March, and Easter Day, the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ, on Sunday 9th April.

This year's interdenominational World Day of Prayer service will take place at St John's on Friday 3rd March, 6.30pm and this year is dedicated to women in Taiwan.

At the time of writing, we are anticipating the arrival of a newly appointed Associate Priest, following the retirement of Revd Sheila Walker last May. We hope to be able to print

a welcome and introduction in the next magazine!

Please do come along to a church service: you can be sure of a warm welcome! And stay for a cup of tea or coffee with biscuits and friendly conversation afterwards.

## WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

6.30pm - Friday 3rd March.

This year the service is taking place at St. John the Baptist, Chalkhouse Green Road, Kidmore End. RG4 9AX. The 2023 service has been put together by the women of Taiwan and the local churches have come together to put it into action.

Everyone is invited to the service and to stay on for a light supper. Come and join this mighty prayer wave encircling the world.

It is truly uplifting and inspiring to be part of this wave of prayer that encircles the world on this special day. The World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of Christians who come together to celebrate a common day of prayer each year on the first Friday in March. It is international and interdenominational. Each year the service is written by the Christian women of a different country. This year it is the turn of Taiwan and is entitled, "I have heard about your faith" (Ephesians 1:15-19)

Taiwan is the main island in an

archipelago of about 100 other smaller islands in the western Pacific Ocean roughly 100 miles off the coast of southeastern China.

It is the second most densely populated country in the world. The main language spoken is Mandarin. Taipei in the north of the country is the capital. Cities are linked by highspeed rail and highways. It is a fascinating country and you will find out more about it and its people when you attend the service.

The people of Taiwan are greatly in need of our prayers at this time, as you will no doubt have seen on the news, owing to its complex relationship with China.

This service, however, is full of encouragement, positivity and faith.

The encouragement from knowing that the people of God are praying.

The positivity of giving thanks to God for encouragement, given and received.

The faith in knowing the Lord Jesus.

Come and take part in this wonderful service, written by the women of Taiwan, organised in this area by local churches together. All are welcome.

Put the date in your diary - Friday 3rd March at 6.30pm followed by a light supper at St. John the Baptist, Chalkhouse Green Road, Kidmore End, RG4 9AX. ●

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# NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

## IT'S RIGHT ON YOUR DOORSTEP ...



Even before it was designated “a warm space” by the council, Sonning Common Library in Grove Road offered a warm welcome to all. You do not need to be a member, nor do you have to borrow a book. You can just go in and use the free wifi, read the Henley Standard, or simply sit and contemplate the world (although it may not be good to dwell on that for too long in these uncertain times). Please check the opening times - you are always welcome!

Friday mornings are a particularly social time as hot drinks and biscuits are on offer between 10:30 and 12:30. Some people take the opportunity to catch up with friends or make new ones but you are equally welcome if you would prefer to sit quietly away from others. There

is plenty of space. One advantage to visiting the library frequently is the chance to learn first-hand about what is going on, for example the council is currently distributing free food waste bags through the library. Call in to collect yours.

Following the success of last year's author evenings, The Friends of Sonning Common Library are planning to resume these in the spring. Details will be available soon. There is also a noticeboard in the library where other local events and activities are advertised. Pop in some time and take a look.

A variety of activities for children are also run at the library and are usually either free, or heavily subsidised by The Friends of Sonning Common Library. These include storytimes on a Saturday morning, and rhymetimes for the under 5s at 11:00 am on the first and third

Mondays of the month. These are both free and a fun way to entertain your little ones without having to travel far. Why not come along and see for yourself? Alternatively, call 0118 972 2448 or email [sonningcommon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sonningcommon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk) for more details.

## OPENING TIMES

|           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| Monday    | 14:00-17:00 |
| Tuesday   | Closed      |
| Wednesday | 14:00-19:00 |
| Thursday  | 09:00-13:00 |
|           | 14:00-17:00 |
| Friday    | 09:00-13:00 |
|           | 14:00-17:00 |
| Saturday  | 09:30-12:30 |

## REGULAR EVENTS

- Rhymetimes on the first and third Mondays of the month at 11am, for pre-schoolers (led by volunteers)
- Social mornings every Friday, from 10.30am - come for a coffee and a chat, or maybe a game of Scrabble?
- Gadget sessions - help with technology, (maybe an unexpected Christmas present?) arranged with a volunteer at a time to suit you

- Storytimes - every Saturday morning at 10am, with Saturday 'specials' approximately once a month (crafts to try, and cakes for sale). Aimed at under 9s

We have Zoolab visiting at half term - register your interest in the library as it's always popular and spaces are limited.

Libraries all round the county have been designated 'Warm Spaces', where people

can come to work, or socialise, or just sit, to save on their heating bills. Hot drinks are on offer too! (tea/coffee/chocolate)

For up-to-date information about any library events contact the library direct: [sonningcommon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sonningcommon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or 0118 972 2448 ●

Rosemary Dunstan



## PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 25

Quiz: One-letter answers  
1. N, 2. B, 3. T, 4. Q, 5. X, 6. K, 7. D (Delano),  
8. L, 9. P, 10. K.

THE MAN WHO READS NOTHING AT ALL IS  
BETTER EDUCATED THAN THE MAN WHO  
READS NOTHING BUT NEWSPAPERS. —  
THOMAS JEFFERSON

Cryptogram

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| 7 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 5 |
| 9 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| 2 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 4 |
| 5 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 9 |
| 3 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| 8 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 6 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 7 |

Sudoku

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | D | N | U | O | H | A | N | V | Y | U | G |
| E | I | G | S | R | R | N |   |   |   |   |   |
| D | N | A | E | R | A | H | O | H | A | D | I |
| A | R | A | T | C | I | Y |   |   |   |   |   |
| L | R | A | C | O | N | O | I | D | L | D | E |
| G | E |   |   |   | A | N |   |   |   |   | F |
|   | E | T | A | T | C | S | U | S |   |   | R |
| E |   |   | S | A |   |   | U |   |   |   | N |
| S | R | E | T | O | L | E | G | D | U | N |   |
| E | S | O | E |   | G |   |   |   |   |   | I |
| E | S | O | H | O | T | E | R | H | E | W |   |
| H | O | P | C | I |   |   |   |   |   |   | E |
| C | L | I | C |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | N |

Cryptic crossword

## ADVERTISERS DIRECTORY

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